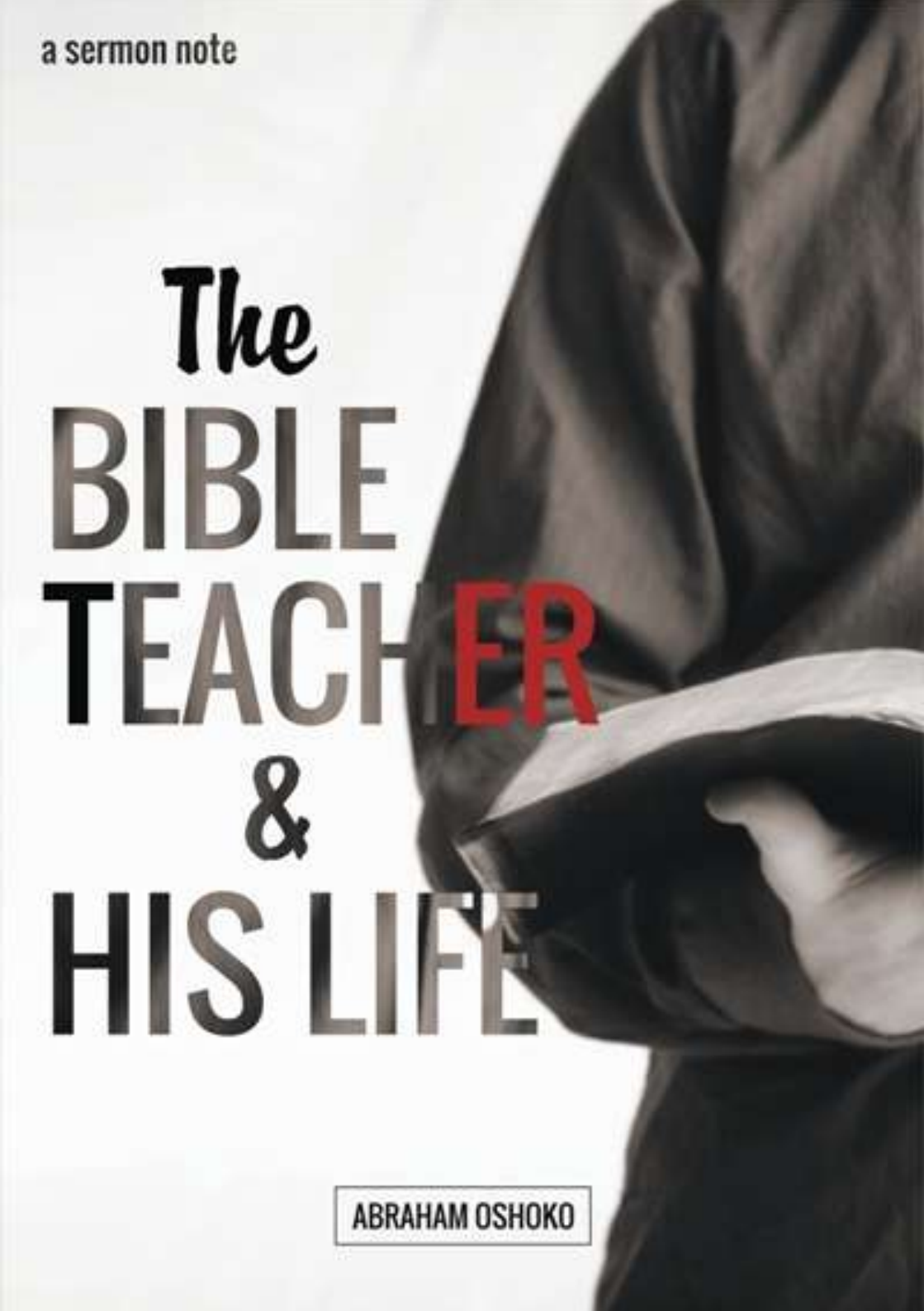


a sermon note

A person wearing a dark, textured robe is shown from the chest down, holding an open book. The person's face is partially visible in profile, looking down at the text. The background is a plain, light color.

The
BIBLE
TEACHER **ER**
&
HIS LIFE

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THE BIBLE TEACHER & HIS LIFE

**Foursquare Students Fellowship Bible teachers Vigil,
MAPOLY, Abeokuta**

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SERMON NOTE

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THE BIBLE TEACHER & HIS LIFE

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HYMN:

My hope is built on nothing less

1. My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

2. When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
in ev'ry high and stormy gale
my anchor holds within the veil.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

3. His oath, His covenant, His blood
support me in the 'whelming flood;
when all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand.

4. When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
dressed in His righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;

all other ground is sinking sand.

I

THE RESTORATION OF THE ALTAR & THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE

[EZRA 3:1-13]

“And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel [*were*] in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.”(Ezra 3:1 (NKJV))

As a way of introduction of the happening of events before the book of Ezra, both the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah had forsaken God and clung to idols. Israel was first destroyed and its ten tribes carried away captive by the Assyrians.

After about a hundred years plus, Judah also went into captivity after being defeated by Babylon. They remained in Babylon for seventy years, after which

God promised to restore them back to their own land [Jer.25:11].

The books of Nehemiah and Ezra narrate the story of the return to the land of Israel with Nehemiah focusing on the building of the walls of Jerusalem and Ezra on the restoration of the Altar, the Temple and the Law of God.

In applying these events to our own day & time, the Lord is about to restore to us the true gospel. Just as Judah was carried captive for seventy years by Babylon because of their backsliding, the Nigerian church had been carried away captive by false doctrines, compromise, worldliness and sin in the last seventy years after the great CAC revivals of the 1930s under Apostle Babalola.

The Lord in His infinite mercy has planned to restore the Nigerian church as it will be at the forefront of the global reformation that will prepare the Church worldwide before the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Thus, chapter one of Ezra talks about how God moved the King Cyrus to initiate the return of Israel and the rebuilding of the Lord's temple. The second chapter focused on the list of the returnees. In the same way, all over this nation, small Christian groups are arising that do not care about position, human honour, money or ministerial pride.

They are mission oriented and are interested in nothing else but the full restoration of the Nigerian church back to biblical standards. This typifies Ezra chapter one. The names of such individuals and ministries involved in this quiet labours, registered by Heaven typifies Ezra chapter two.

“And when the seventh month had come, and the children of Israel [*were*] in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem.”(Ezra 3:1 (NKJV))

The number seven in scripture typifies perfection. Thus, **“And when the seventh month had come...”** means it is now the time for all the Bible

teachers of MAPOLY to focus on building to maturity the church of God in this school so that Jesus will be magnified in every fellowship, whether departmental or denominational.

But the Word of God says something that is very crucial... it says, “**the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem...**” this is the matter. If a revival will sweep across this school, if a reformation will break loose upon us, then we dare not make the mistake that our fathers have made. We must labour together as one man [Phil.2:1-4].

The only way we will attract Heaven to back us in pushing forward the Kingdom of God in our own generation is if we don't care who takes the glory. The Kingdom of God will advance in our day if nobody's name is mentioned and Jesus alone is lifted. Our only strength is in the power of our unity. Division weakens and that is exactly what Satan wants. As long as we are divided into small-small groups, we will remain weak and insignificant and we will be no threat to his Kingdom [Mk.3:24].

If we will understand again that we are one body even though there are different parts of the same body, we are focused on the same goal, a reformation will be birthed. Enough of being competitive and doing programs that are not biblical only as a means of attracting crowds.

However, if we all gather together as one man, then why are we gathered? What is it we intend to achieve? This is the next thing the Holy Spirit will be speaking to us about...

“Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as [it is] written in the Law of Moses the man of God.”Ezra 3:2 (NKJV)

The descendants of the chief priests and other leaders, came together for the singular purpose of building the altar of the Lord. This is where we must begin from. We will remember in 1Kings 18:30 that

Elijah, the man of God repaired the altar of the Lord which had been broken down...if restoration of righteousness must come to any people, the leaders must be the first to repair and rebuild their own personal altars [Gen.35:1-7].

That brings us to a crucial question, what is an altar and how does it affect us as Bible teachers and preachers?

Exodus 20:23-24[NLT]

Altars are places of sacrifice. They are points in our lives where God reminds us of who He is. There are points where we acknowledge that without His direct help, we would have been sorely disappointed or even destroyed. We acknowledge this by offering Him sacrifices of praise and the surrendering of our own lives again and again at every point [Gen.8:20-21]. The ultimate altar of sacrifice is the Cross of Calvary.

Noah built an altar after God delivered him from the flood [Gen.8:20-21], Abraham built altars

[Gen.12:7-8, Gen.13:14-18], Isaac and Jacob equally built altars [Gen.26:23-25, Gen.33:20]. Pastor, can you think back to points in your life where God had been faithful to you or where He revealed Himself mightily to you? These are points you ought to build altars in [Deut.4:9].

In Ezra 3, Jeshua and his brethren the priests and Zerubbabel the governor of Judah and his own people all arose to build the altar of the Lord. Do you know that if you will not arise to build altars at every point God manifested Himself to you, you will not be useful to Him this semester? How can you teach your people about God's power to deliver them when you yourself have no altar that proves that God had delivered you before? How can you teach men convincingly about anything when you have no personal experience of God's faithfulness in the same thing [1Jn.1:1-3]?

“And they built the altar where it had stood before, even though they were afraid of the people who were already living around there.

Then every morning and evening they burned sacrifices and offerings to the LORD.”Ezra 3:3 (CEV)

The Holy Spirit is saying that there are some of us who even had altars before, but something happened...those altars were altered. Because of the *fear of the people living around* [i.e. circumstances and divers trials facing us], several of us have forgotten the points in our lives where the Lord showed up for us...carnal reasoning has overwhelmed several of us who now doubt the possibility of God still helping us in the specific challenges that confronts us today...[1Sam.17:32-37]

My brother, are you now thinking of using gimmicks in finding someone you'll marry? You need to rebuild your altars where they stood before...for you have forsaken your true love and you are now clinging to the lies of Satan [Rev.2:4].

As you rebuild these altars through your remembrance of God's faithfulness [Deut.8:2-3]and you daily offer Him offerings of thanksgiving

and praise both morning and evening, it will shock you how God will arise for you in the very challenges and trials facing you today.

The foundation of the temple

“From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.” Ezra 3:6 (AMP)

As a Bible teacher, once you have repaired and rebuilt your personal altar, you now have the experiential knowledge necessary for the teaching ministry; however, there is something important you must not gloss over, it is this matter of the foundation of the temple of the Lord. The Bible says: **“From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.”**

While personal altars are good for ministry, we need to pay a close attention to the matter of foundation.

The reason why most people who teach the Bible today veer off into error is this same matter. It is because they are not securely planted on the foundation every ministry that will last long needs...

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”1Cor. 3:11 (NKJV)

Dear Bible teacher, have you firmly planted your own life on following the man Jesus Christ? The bedrock of everything you point men to, is it Jesus the Ancient of Days or is it one of the new doctrines peddled by recent men as the gospel? Your own very faith, is it founded upon this same Jesus and His finished work on the Cross of Calvary?

We are the very temple of God [2Cor. 6:16], but the foundation on which this temple must be built is the life and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ [Matt.3:17]. I join the Lord to ask you, please on what are you building? On what does your hope rest? So many people preach the Bible today and regardless of how big their titles are among men,

once what they are bearing before men is not this mystery of God, once it is not Jesus in whom dwelleth all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge [Col.2:3], once it is not this man, in whom all the Godhead dwells in bodily [Col.2:9], Heaven doesn't recognize such men [2Jn.1:9-11].

***Note: Col.1:25-29**

“They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to Joppa, according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.” Ezra 3:7 (NKJV)

In order to make sure that you are planted and rooted upon this Rock, what will be too much for you to pay? What price will be too much for you to pay in order for Heaven to recognize and stamp your life and teaching with divine approval? In order for the returnees to build the foundation of the temple in Jerusalem, they gave money to the masons and carpenters; they provided the people of Sidon and

Tyre with food, drink and oil so that they can bring cedar wood from Lebanon to Joppa across the Mediterranean sea ...

I ask you again, who has been teaching you the Bible that you have been boldly disregarding the teachings of Jesus, the same man who God points all men to [Matt.3:17]? What will you spare in your pursuit of the Lord?

II

THE ANCESTRY & THE LIFE OF THE BIBLE TEACHER [EZRA 7:1-10]

Ezra 7:1-5

The Holy Spirit intends to point something very important to us in these verses above...it is a universal biblical law that everything reproduces after its own kind [Gen.1:24]. While Gamaliel was contented with leaving the Christians alone lest they find themselves fighting against God [Acts 5:33-39], Saul his disciple was not contented with the death of Stephen and the imprisonment of countless believers as he would rather go to Damascus, in order to bring every man and woman who bears the name of Jesus bound back to Jerusalem [Acts 9:1-2].

Thus, every Bible teacher, whether a Pharisee [Matt.23:15] or a genuine Christian [1Tim.1:1-2] is born, nurtured and raised by a father [or a disciple] who in turn is raised by another father and another.

While I was wondering why the Holy Spirit would trace the ancestry line of Ezra all the way up to Aaron the first chief priest by carefully detailing 17 generations, the Lord pointed the actual reason to me... If we were to trace your ancestry line as a Christian, taking all your beliefs and convictions into consideration, where will your line end? Will it end with a heretic who just suddenly stood up and proclaimed his own doctrine [Acts 20:29-30] or will you go all the way up to the apostles and the Lord Jesus Himself [Acts 2:42, Acts 1:1, Jn.8:31]?

Make no mistake, today, there is another gospel, another Jesus and another spirit [2Cor.11:4]. I need to ask you, is your faith based on the teachings of the apostles of the Lamb and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone Himself? Who brought you up?

The matter of the ancestry of a Bible teacher is very important. The reason is because if your ancestral lineage is wrong, your doctrine cannot be right [Matt.7:16-18]. In introducing Ezra as a Bible teacher, the Bible began by showing us that this man's lineage is correct. He was a Levite, from the very family of Aaron, the first chief priest.

Thus, if you are one of the people who listen to these recent men whose ancestry is either in question or their lineage ends up with a heretic or an apostate, you can repent, unlearn whatever wrong doctrinal poison you have swallowed and be re-grafted into Christ- afterall, He was the one who died for you and not any man [Heb.7:25].

“This Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.”Ezra 7:6 (NIV)

Like Ezra, if you will matter to the eternal purpose of God for this school, you must come up. Whereas, Ezra came up from Babylon to Jerusalem, you will need to come up from worldliness and worldly preaching to what is beneficiary to the eternal Kingdom of God.

Must you too be carried away with this modern day gospel that teaches nothing else but the things that ends only in this world? The gospel Jesus brought is eternal in its scope and impact, how come you are focusing on things that cannot go beyond the grave [1Cor.15:19, 1Tim.6:7]?

You must come up! If you want your name to matter to God, you cannot continue to stay in Babylon. You must come to Jerusalem. The number of those who are on pulpit and are truthful are few... must Heaven subtract you too? In the days of Elijah, there were 850 false prophets to just one Elijah [1Kgs.18:19], at the time of Micaiah, it was only him against four hundred demon possessed false prophets [1Kgs.22:6-8], at the time of Gideon, only 300 men

were useful in an army of 32,000 men [Judg.7:2-7]
and at the time of Joshua and Caleb, they were the
only ones on God's side in a whole generation
[Num.26:65, Josh.14:6-9, Deut.1:35-36]...will you
also go away [Jn.6:66-67]?

III

THE LIFE OF A BIBLE TEACHER...

In Ezra 7:6, the Bible tells us about a Bible teacher who was skilled in handling the Word of God so much that the heart of kings were opened to him to give him whatever he requested. This was possible because the hand of the Lord was upon him.

Ezra is not like many ‘Gehazis’ on the pulpit today who have no godly lifestyle beyond their time on the pulpit [Judg.7:17, 1Cor.11:1]. He was not a prodigal son who squanders divine presence on little things that are normally additions to men who serve God in truth and in spirit [Matt.6:33].

If after this meeting the hand of God comes upon you and He identifies with your work, what will you use the influence for? Will you make merchandise of men or will you be content to capture souls for the

Master [compare 2Pet.2:3 & Rom.16:18 with 1Pet.5:2 & Acts 20:28]?

If we read from verse 10, we will see the secret of Ezra...we will see why he had such power both with God and with men...

“Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the LORD, to practicing it, and to teaching all its laws and regulations to the people of Israel.” Ezra 7:10 [GNB]

“Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the LORD...”

This is the first thing about the genuine Bible teacher. He lives a devoted life...a life devoted to the study of the Word of God [2Tim.2:15AMP]. It is very important for us to look closely at this...the major problem the church has today is scriptural laziness [Acts 17:11]: both in the pulpit and in the pews.

Every time there are no genuine Bible teachers, the quality of Christian lifestyle falls in the church and people become worldly, carnal and compromising [Prov.29:18]. The reason why there are so many heresies today and the general state of weakness in the church is because there are not enough men who will sit down with the Word of God, dissecting and digesting it and breaking it down to very simple components the ordinary Christian can take home and work on[2Tim.2:15 AMP, Dan.9:2-3].

How devoted are you to the Word of God? Do you rush to compile Sunday school sermon by Saturday night? This is why it will not be powerful nor life-changing, for it has not changed you yourself [1Jn.1:1-3]! The attitude of prayer and devotion to the Word of God is a constant necessity in the lives of men whom God used mightily [Acts 6:2-4, 2Tim.3:16-17 NLT].

The neglect of a deep study of the Word and prayer is the sole reason why there are so many carnal

pastors and Sunday school teachers today [2Cor.3:18, James 1:23-25].

Another trap we must avoid while we are intending to devote ourselves to a study of the Word is to love studying the Bible because there is a sermon but not study the same Bible for one's own life.

This is one of the most dangerous traps a Christian leader can fall into. I have found out that most people who preach rarely study the Bible for their own souls [Rom.2:1-3].

I also found out that the busier a man becomes in ministry, if he is not careful, the first thing that will suffer and will keep suffering is his devotional life [Mk.3:13-14, Mk.4:34, Lk.24:27, 44-45].

Pastor, how is your personal devotion? Beyond coming to look for a sermon, what is the Holy Spirit saying to your own life now? What are you studying in the Bible that is keeping you on your knees in the place of prayer over your own soul [2Cor.3:18, Heb.4:12]?

This is the matter.

“Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the LORD, to practicing it...”

If we will be like the Lord Jesus and like our brother Ezra, we must make the practice of the Word of God concerning us a lifestyle [Acts 1:1, 1Jn.2:6, 1Pet.2:21]. Many people who handle the Word of God are self-deceived as majority somehow thinks that they are above it. The same burdens in the Word of God that they lay on other people and insist that those people must obey are the very things they don't personally obey [Matt.23:3-4].

Spiritual power in the public comes from personal obedience to the Word of God in private [Ezra 7:10, 2Chron.12:14]. May we always remember this truth...

“Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the LORD, to practicing it, and to teaching all its laws and regulations to the people of Israel.”

I want us to notice when *teaching* is mentioned ...it was only after men devote themselves to a study of the Word for their own souls and prayerfully practice what they are learning. It is then and only then that a man is qualified to teach the Bible. Any other thing apart from this is mere human arrangement that will not stand [James 3:1 AMP].

So many people are in a hurry to be called 'pastor' or 'bishop' such that they refuse to pass their tests. The Word of God has not yet become life in them yet they attempt to interpret it!

It is better to quietly wait on God, hearing Him over our own lives and changing based on his Word to us than running up and down preaching the very things we don't practice. The Lord Jesus said the number of people who will be found in this category in the last day will be many [Matt.7:21-23 NLT].

Ensure you will not be among them...

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